Benefits!

**Improved cafeteria atmosphere**
- students are more relaxed and focused on eating rather than the playground
- less supervision in the cafeteria
- students have improved behavior

**Fewer classroom discipline problems**
- students are calmer when they return to the classroom

**Increase in classroom time on-task**
- students return to the classroom ready to learn

**Increased milk, vegetable, and entree consumption**
- less plate waste, less trash
- increased nutrient and fluid intake; decreased number of nurse visits

- Include recess before lunch as part of your wellness policy
- Low cost to implement
- After a morning of classes, kids are ready to play

For more information:
donload the Recess Before Lunch Guidebook from the Montana Team Nutrition Program

www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/recessBL

Listen!

Comments about Recess Before Lunch:

“Previously we had four adults in the cafeteria supervising students…we now manage our lunchroom with two adults and our trash has reduced from 8 cans to 2½. It seems logical that schools will do everything in their power to encourage students to eat healthier meals.”

— Brent Caldwell
Principal
Sheridan County SD #1

“RBL is definitely worthwhile; everyone is positive about it and will work to see it continues as part of our schedule.”

— Donna Toly
School Food Service Director
Sweetwater County SD #1

“Teachers like Recess Before Lunch as the students are more ready to settle down in the classroom after lunch than they used to be coming in from recess; students also eat better.”

— Carol Boal
School Nurse
Natrona County SD #1
Ready, set...

Seek input from the school and community
Gain a commitment from administrators, food service staff, parents and teachers
Observe schools that have Recess Before Lunch
Plan recess and lunch schedules that allow adequate time to eat
• incorporate a hand-washing plan into the schedule
• encourage students to prepay for lunch to avoid losing money on the playground

Go!

Focus on the benefits rather than the obstacles
• think about what’s best for the students

Students are likely to be hungrier and thirstier
• have cold water available
• promote the school’s breakfast program

Anticipate some resistance to change

Expect the schedule to be a work-in-progress
• practice the new routine and trial for at least a year

Create a lunch atmosphere that supports healthy eating
Recess after lunch often finds the student focused on the playground, not his or her lunch. Enhanced nutrition and better behavior go hand-in-hand; recess before lunch offers an opportunity for students to benefit from both.

Supporting research for Recess Before Lunch programs
A Montana Recess Before Lunch pilot study documented improvement in the mealtime atmosphere and students’ behavior. Discipline problems on the playground, in the lunchroom, and in the classroom decreased.

A 2004 study by Bergman and colleagues of recess before lunch showed comparable results to a previous study by Mary J. Getlinger, et al. After implementing recess before lunch, plate waste decreased from 40 percent to 27 percent. In addition, consumption of calcium-rich foods increased 35 percent along with significant increases in most other vitamin- and mineral-rich foods.*

Research repeatedly shows recess before lunch can help students perform better in school, eat healthier, and promote a lunchroom atmosphere conducive to eating.
